

Summary of Research

Results of the 2004 Fishing Access Site Telephone Survey

Michael S. Lewis

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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) currently manages approximately 320 fishing access sites (FAS) across the state that provide public access to Montana's diverse waters for fishing and other water-based recreational pursuits.

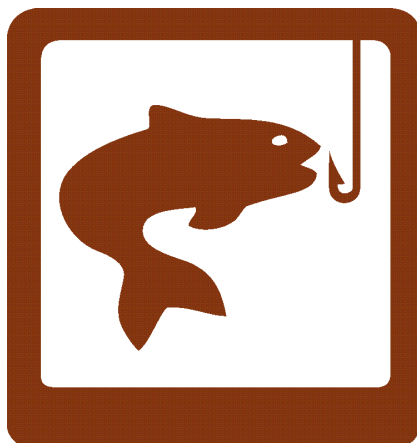
During the spring of 2003, FWP conducted a telephone survey of Montanans (16 years of age or older) for the purpose of gathering baseline information on the use of FAS's by state residents. The main goal of the survey was to determine the percent of resident FAS users who hold a Montana fishing license. The following kinds of information were sought via this survey:

1. What percent of Montanans (age 16 years or older) used a FAS during the past year (12 months)?
2. What types of recreational activities did Montanans participate in while visiting FAS's during the past year?
3. What were the background characteristics of FAS users such age, gender, and whether or not they had purchased a fishing license during the past year?

OVERALL, AN EXCELLENT RESPONSE TO THE TELEPHONE SURVEY WAS ACHIEVED

A total of 3,018 Montana phone numbers were randomly selected for participation in the survey using a random digit dialing process (RDD). No fewer than three different call attempts were made to each of these phone numbers in an effort to contact someone who was 16 years of age or older.

To ensure that survey participants were not self-selected, the interviewers requested to speak with the person who was present in the household at the time of the call who had the most recent birthday and was 16 years of age or older.



As expected, a significant number (N=1,127) of the 3,018 randomly selected telephone numbers were not usable (e.g., no longer in service, fax machine, blocked number, professional business, or non-resident).

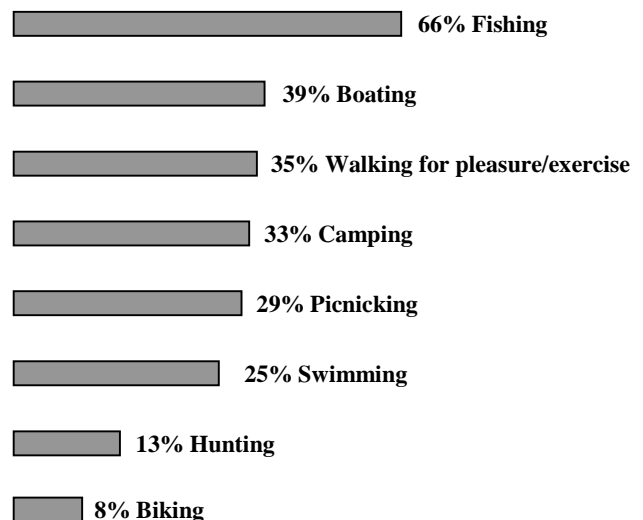
Hence, there were a total of 1,891 usable telephone numbers. From the usable telephone numbers:

- 820 telephone interviews were successfully completed (about twice as many as was expected).
- There were a total of 371 confirmed refusals to participate in the survey.
- There were 700 telephone numbers in which no one was contacted after three different call attempts due to a number of reasons (e.g., answering machine, busy signal, ring with no answer, hang up, no one home who was 16 years of age or older, etc.).

SURVEY RESULTS

Thirty-nine percent of the 820 survey respondents reported they had used a FAS in Montana during the past 12 months. **Of those respondents, 77 percent said they had purchased a Montana fishing license during the past year as well.**

Fishing was by far the most frequently mentioned recreational activity reported by survey respondents. The following illustrates the percent of survey respondents who reported they participated in each of eight different recreational pursuits while visiting a FAS(s) during the past year:



In terms of the background characteristics of the survey respondents who reported they had used a FAS during the past year:

- Sixty-one percent were male; 39 were female.
- The average and median age was 46 years.

DISCUSSION

Fishing access sites (FAS) provide public access to Montana's diverse lakes, rivers, and streams. Prior to this survey, very little was known about the extent to which Montanans use FAS's. This survey provided FWP with much needed baseline information concerning the use of FAS's by state residents.

The primary goal of the survey was to determine the percent of resident FAS users that hold a Montana fishing license. The vast majority of funding for FAS's comes from the sale of fishing licenses and federal taxes on the sale of fishing equipment. Hence, it is important to know what proportion of FAS users are in fact anglers. From this survey, it was determined that a significant majority (77 percent) of state residents who used a FAS(s) during the past year had purchased a Montana fishing license during the past year as well.

FWP anticipates replicating this survey periodically to monitor trends in the use of FAS's by state residents over time.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael S. Lewis, Human Dimensions Specialist, Responsive Management Unit of FWP, Helena, Montana.

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Contact the Responsive Management Unit of FWP by phone at (406) 444-4758.

